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ABSTRACT

Data from 164 questionnaires completed by users of Toronto's Municipal Reference Library over a 2-day period in April 1980 were used to construct a profile of user characteristics. The questionnaire addressed such factors as the user's reason for coming to the library, the types of materials consulted, staff assistance, user knowledge of the library's collection, and awareness of the library's telephone reference service. The user's occupation and place of residence were also considered. It was found that 60 percent of the respondents used the library for assignments for job-related research, 35 percent were students, and 75 percent were at least partially successful in finding materials they needed. The report contains tables that display the data and discusses factors affecting the accuracy of the data. Appendices provide a copy of the questionnaire and a listing of the responses received, and three references are cited. (FM)

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A USER STUDY

OF THE

METROPOLITAN TORONTO LIBRARY BOARD

MUNICIPAL REFERENCE LIBRARY

by

Mirren Hinchley

This report has been prepared for the Municipal Reference Library, under the supervision of Mrs. M. Hewings in partial fulfillment of the requirements for course LIB 2005 Directed Field Work - Public Libraries: Administrative Practice, Professor: L.G. Denis.

University of Toronto
Faculty of Library Science
April 1980

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INTRODUCTION

Mrs. Margot Hewings, head of the Metropolitan Toronto Library Board, Municipal Reference Library, indicated that user statistics for 1979 had decreased for the second consecutive year. She assumed that this decrease was due to major changes in the collection between 1976-78. During this period all English language newspapers and telephone directories were moved to the Metropolitan Toronto Library. The Municipal Reference Library also gradually phased out the business material in its collection. Changes were made to the provincial and federal documents that were held by the Library. Vertical file material was reorganized and a coin photocopying service was also added during this period. The Library's map collection was improved and the Municipal Reference Library's overall selection policy was refined.

Mrs. Hewings stressed that these were only some of the major changes that had occurred in the Library and she hoped that a user study would verify her observations as well as explain the user patterns of the Library.

A user study of the Municipal Reference Library was therefore carried out by one student from the Faculty of Library Science of the University of Toronto on April 21 and 22, 1980. This study was for the course 'Directed Field Work In Public Libraries - Administrative Practice.'

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The Municipal Reference Library is an unique public library. It provides for its users local government information. Due to its special collection a questionnaire had to be developed that reflected this Library's special needs.

The head librarian was shown a modified version of the questionnaire that was developed for a user study done at Metropolitan Toronto Library in 1979. Mrs. Hewings and her staff reworked the questionnaire so that it reflected the needs of their unique clientele.

For example the Municipal Reference Library's urban affairs collection is international in scope. It was felt by the Library staff that not enough users knew about this characteristic. Therefore, the staff developed Question L (What places does the Municipal Reference Library have material on?) to prove this point.

The staff was also concerned that not enough people were aware of the Municipal Reference Library's telephone reference service. They therefore developed Questions H (Did you know that the MRL gives telephone reference service?), I (If you know that MRL offers telephone reference service, have you used it?) and J (If you answered 'No' why not?).

Since there are many times that the reference staff can only partially answer their user's questions the option partially was used in some of the questions as an alternative to yes or no.

Questions B (What kinds of materials did you use?) and N (What is your occupation?) were revised so that the categories reflected the types of materials and patrons that are unique to this 'special' public library.

What time a patron entered and left the Library was not an important factor that Mrs. Hewings wished to consider in this survey so that entrance and exit times were not incorporated into this questionnaire.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

Two days were chosen for the study. A pre-test was conducted on Tuesday, April 15, 1980. No problems with any of the questions was encountered during the test period. The actual test was carried out on Monday, April 21, 1980 and Tuesday, April 22, 1980. The questionnaire was distributed for all hours the library was open which was 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

The questionnaires were issued in two different colours for the different days. The Faculty of Library Science student was stationed at the entrance of the library and each person was to receive a questionnaire. Questionnaires were returned as the user left the library. Mrs. Hewings also requested that anyone using the photocopying machine just outside the entrance to the Library be given a survey as well.

It was difficult to get the users to fill out the questionnaire more than once. Refusals were therefore greater on the second day.

On April 21, 1980 97 questionnaires were given out and 77 (80%) were returned. 14 users refused the questionnaire on the first day. On April 22, 1980 115 questionnaires were given out and 87 (76%) were returned. There were 32 users on the second day who refused the questionnaire. In total 164 questionnaires were returned over the two days.

SAMPLING AND TABULATION OF DATA

Since only 164 questionnaires were returned it was decided to do the tabulations by hand. Very complex tabulations will be hard to access because the individual cell frequencies will not contain enough information for any deductions to be made. The more complex tables will not use percentages because the low frequencies in each cell distort the figures when they are converted to percentages. Where percentages are used the decimal points are rounded off.

When a user does not respond to a question on the questionnaire a no response is calculated in order for the percentages to be taken from the total population.

Please keep in mind that for Questions A, B and L the user could check off more than one answer. Therefore the percentage totals in some of the tables will total to more than 100%.

Since no one indicated on the questionnaire that they were a politician this column will be left off on all the tables.

When the tabulation for occupations is cross tabulated with another category there are six questionnaires that can not be used. Therefore, the horizontal column at the end of these tables with the heading 'No Response' indicates this and must be counted in with the other columns for the total to equal 164 users.

N in all cases is the total number of users being sampled whether it be 164 users (N=164) or 58 students (N=58).

REASONS FOR LIBRARY USE AND USER CHARACTERISTICS

As was stated 164 users responded to the questionnaire handed out over the two days. Let us first examine why they came to the library.

Due to the nature of the Municipal Reference Library's collection it is safe to assume that most users who are using this library are here for a specific purpose.

As is indicated in Table 1 31% came to do an assignment and 31% also came to do job related research. 14% came to do other research and 12% came for other reasons. 4 users indicated that their other research involved work on Masters and PHD research. Of the 22 users who indicated that they used the Library for other reasons 14 indicated they came to read the newspapers and 4 stated they just came to read.

Please remember that more than one reason could be given for coming to the Library and therefore the percentages could be greater than 100%.

What are the various occupations of these users? Table 2 indicates that students are the biggest users of the Library (35%) while 18% are government employees. However it is interesting to note that 32% indicated that they had other occupations. Appendix B gives a list of these other occupations from those who would reply to the question.

No one indicated that they were a politician. The Library

TABLE 1

Why did you come to the Library today? Users could cite more than one reason. N=177

Do an Assignment	Study	Job-related Research	Other Research	Other	No Response
31% (55)	10% (18)	31% (54)	14% (24)	12% (22)	2% (4)

TABLE 2

What is your occupation? N=164

Student	Gov't Employee	Consulting/ Research Firm	Law Firm	Other	No Response
35% (58)	18% (29)	9% (14)	2% (4)	32% (53)	4% (6)

wanted this category on the questionnaire but indicated that not many politicians come to the Library now because they have research assistants to do their research. If the survey is repeated at a later date it would be safe to assume that this category could be left off the questionnaire.

From Table 2 I was trying to get at the point that there is a large percentage of 'gentlemen' who have nowhere else to go who use the Library. However, very few indicated this. Only 5 indicated that they were unemployed out of the 53 users who responded to the other occupations category. 8 indicated that they were retired. Personal observation during the survey indicated to me that approximately 12% of the users were these type of 'gentlemen'. Casual observation of several of the questionnaires when they were returned indicated that several of the 'gentlemen' did not truthfully indicate their occupation or real reason for coming to the Library. Therefore, there is a good possibility that these 'gentlemen' could distort some of the figures and this should be kept in mind when looking at the tables.

We can now look at what the various occupations are using the Library for. Again please note that the users could choose more than one answer and the percentages in the tables may add up to more than 100%.

It is obvious in Table 3 that of the 58 students who come to the Library 44 were there to do asignments and of the 29

TABLE 3

Why did you come to the Library today?

	Student	Gov't Employee	Consulting/ Research Firm	Law Firm	Other	No Response
	N=58	N=29	N=14	N=4	N=53	6
Do An Assignment	44	4	1	0	6	
Study	4	4	0	0	8	
Job-Related Research	8	13	9	3	19	
Other Research	6	1	5	1	6	
Other	2	4	0	0	17	

*Please note that more than one reason may be given for coming to the Library.

government employees using the Library 13 were doing job related research.

However, it is the column indicating other occupations that a problem arises. 53 users indicated that they had other occupations than those listed. A significant number indicated they were there to do job related research (19) and 17 indicated that they were there for other reasons. Since, as I stated before, many users were not truthful about indicating their real reasons for coming to the Library or their occupation it is difficult to separate the real users in this category and the 'gentlemen' who are there because they have nowhere else to go.

You can not assume that anyone who is reading the newspapers in the Library is one of these 'gentlemen.' 4 government employees indicated that they had come to do this. The figures are just too small and the information is too sketchy to come to any firm conclusions.

Table 4 examines the kinds of materials that are being used. As you would expect the largest percentage are using books (32%) while there are significant percentages who are using the magazines (16%) and vertical file materials (18%). Only 2% are using microfilm and microfiche and this is an indication that the Library should look into seeing how they can get more of their users to use this type of material. Very few stated what other materials they were using in the Library and therefore no conclusions can be drawn from this column.

TABLE 4

What kinds of materials did you use? Users could cite more than one reason. N=227

Books	3[illegible]%
Magazines	16%
Vertical Files	18%
Microfilm/ Microfiche	2%
Council Bylaws, Minutes, etc.	10%
Other	15%
No Response	7%

Table 5 breaks the use of materials down by occupation. It is not surprising to again note that books were in heavy demand by all occupations. Students seem to rely heavily on vertical file material (21 out of 58 students) and they were also the heaviest users of the council bylaws, minutes, agendas, etc. (10 out of 58 students). Again I can not comment on the significantly large number of other occupations who used other materials because not enough responses were given.

Table 6 cross tabulates the relationship between the different tasks people are doing in the Library with the types of materials they are using. Again as the previous tables have indicated out of 55 users who indicated that they were doing assignments 38 used books and 24 used vertical file material. 54 users indicated that they were doing job related research in the Library and as the table indicates a significant number used books (23) while 12 used magazines, 9 vertical file material, 8 council bylaws, minutes, agendas, etc. and 12 other materials. As was indicated before all columns show that microfilm and microfiche are not being used by the users.

The last sets of tables have shown that books are a very important part of the Municipal Reference Library's collection. However, a significant number of users are also using the Library's magazines, vertical file materials and council bylaws, minutes, agendas, etc.

TABLE 5

What kinds of materials did you use? Users could cite more than one reason.

	Student	Gov't Employee	Consulting/ Research Firm	Law Firm	Other	No Response
	N=58	N=29	N=14	N=4	N=53	6
Books	40	11	7	0	16	
Magazines	8	7	5	0	11	
Vertical Files	21	3	3	0	7	
Microfilm/ Microfiche	2	0	2	0	0	
Council Bylaws, Agendas, etc.	10	3	2	2	5	
Other	6	7	2	2	18	
No Response	5	0	1	0	5	

TABLE 6

What kinds of materials did you use? Users could cite more than one reason.

	Do An Assignment	Study	Job-Related Research	Other Research	Other
	N=55	N=18	N=54	N=24	N=22
Books	38	5	23	5	6
Magazines	11	4	12	1	5
Vertical Files	24	2	9	4	2
Microfilm/ Microfiche	2	0	1	1	0
Council Bylaws, Agendas, etc.	9	1	8	6	0
Other	3	4	12	6	12

*Please note that both the vertical and horizontal columns can add up to more than 100%.

As I indicated in the beginning of my paper Mrs. Hewings had stated that the Municipal Reference Library had made some significant changes in its vertical file materials. The figures in the tables seem to show that these materials are in demand and this could be because of the reorganization of this material.

It is too bad that there was such a low response to the other materials that the users were using. Information from this source could have helped the Library evaluate if any improvements should be made in these other areas.

The tables do indicate that not enough people are making use of the Library's microfilm and microfiche collection. Perhaps if the survey is repeated more categories should be added to Question B (What kinds of materials did you use?). If the survey was conducted using an interview method then the interviewer would be able to ask the user specifically what other materials he uses in the Library.

Before turning our attention to the student users let us examine who refers all these users to the Municipal Reference Library. In Table 7 over half of the users (57%0 were referred by no one. 15% were referred by a friend, 13% by another library and 9% by a teacher or instructor.

It was interesting to note that no one indicated that they had been referred by a parent. The high percentage who indicated that no one referred them seems to show that alot of the users know what they are looking for and that the Municipal Reference Library can help them.

TABLE 7

Who FIRST referred you to this Library? N=164

No One	57%	(94)
Teacher/ Instructor	9%	(15)
Parent	0	0
Friend	15%	(25)
Another Library	13%	(21)
Other	1%	(1)
No Response	5%	(8)
	100%	164

Before we leave this table let me note that the Metropolitan Toronto Library referred 14 users to the Municipal Reference Library, the Parkdale Library, Acres Library, Robarts Library, Northern District Library and the Attorney General's Library each referred one user to the Library.

The Metropolitan Toronto Library referred the most users and no one complained on the questionnaire that they had been given a wrong referral to the Municipal Reference Library.

Table 8 cross tabulates by occupation who first referred them to the Library. The student category has the greatest spread of responses with 20 indicating no one referred them, 13 stating a teacher or instructor referred them, 11 indicating a friend referred them and 12 stating another library referred them. Parents seem to play no role in referring the students to the library. However, in all occupations a significant number are referred by no one.

TABLE 8

Who FIRST referred you to this Library?

	Student	Gov't Employee	Consulting/ Research Firm	Law Firm	Other	No Response
	N=58	N=29	N=14	N=4	N=53	6
No One	20	23	10	3	36	
Teacher/ Instructor	13	0	0	0	1	
Parent	0	0	0	0	0	
Friend	11	2	2	0	8	
Other Library	12	2	2	0	2	
Other	1	0	0	0	2	
No Response	1	2	0	1	4	

STUDENT USERS

As Table 2 indicates students comprise a large percentage of the users of the Municipal Reference Library. Table 9 breaks down the different academic levels of the student users. It indicates that of the 58 students who use the Library 21 are high school users, 6 come from independent schools, 8 are from community colleges, 7 are from Ryerson, 14 are from university and 2 are from other schools (Junior High).

It is obvious that the largest number using the Library are high school students while university students are the second largest group. However, it was indicated to me by the Library staff that these figures are not accurate. They explained that the total users for each day at this time of year was much lower than at other times of the year. Most of the university students, community colleges and Ryerson have finished school by this point. If this survey had been conducted six weeks earlier indications are that the percentages would be drastically altered.

As to the question 'What kinds of materials are the students using?' the figures are fairly obvious. As I have previously stated books are in heavy demand by all students with the high school students (11 out of 21) and university students (5 out of 14) using the vertical file material. It is difficult to draw too many conclusions because most of the cell frequencies are just too low in Table 10.

Since this survey has not caught a large part of the student users it would be perhaps a good idea to conduct this survey in the fall or winter. In this way a higher number of university students would respond to the questionnaire and the cross tabulations would then be more meaningful.

TABLE 9

If you are a student what category are you in? N=58

High School	21
Independent	6
Community College	8
Ryerson	7
University	14
Other	2
	58

Full Time	51
Part Time	7
	58

TABLE 10

What kinds of materials did you use? Users could city more than one reason.

	High School	Independent	Community Colleges	Ryerson	University	Other
	N=21	N=6	N=8	N=7	N=14	N=2
Books	13	6	6	3	8	2
Magazines	2	1	2	2	2	0
Vertical Files	11	6	1	1	5	1
Microfilm/ Mcrofiche	0	0	0	1	1	0
Council Bylaws, Agendas, etc.	3	1	1	1	4	1
Other	0	0	1	1	2	1

LIBRARY MATERIAL

The next set of tabulations looks at whether the users found what they were looking for in the Library. Table 11 indicates that 61% found what they were looking for while 7% did not and 18% found partially what they were looking for. As I stated in the beginning of my paper the Library staff indicated that many times a patron must be referred to another agency or another department at City Hall to complete his answer. Therefore, the indications are that three quarters of the users found all or partially all the materials that they were looking for.

The questionnaire asked the user to specify what the user was looking for if he did not get what he wanted. Again conclusions can not be drawn because responses were not specific enough or there was no response at all. For a list of partial responses see Appendix C.

Table 12 takes these figures one step further and cross tabulates by occupation to see if each group found the materials that they were looking for. In all cases a significant number found what they were looking for. Out of 58 students, 42 found what they wanted and out of 29 government employees 22 found what they wanted. Only 1 student and 1 employee/partner of a consulting firm did not find what they were looking for.

It is significant that such a high percentage found the materials that they wanted. Mrs. Hewings had stated that the

Library had refined its selection policy. The tables seem to indicate that these new selection policies are meeting the needs of the Library's users.

It was hoped that Question M would indicate the types of places people wanted information on. Again the responses were not specific enough and not enough responses were given for any major conclusions to be drawn. Appendix D lists the responses that were given.

TABLE 11

If you came for materials, did you find what you wanted? N=164

Yes	61%	(100)
No	7%	(12)
Partially	18%	(29)
No Response	14%	(23)
	100%	164

TABLE 12

If you came for materials, did you find what you wanted?

	Student	Gov't Employee	Consulting/ Research Firm	Law Firm	Other	No Response
	N=58	N=29	N=14	N= 4	N=53	6
Yes	42	22	6	3	28	
No	1	0	1	1	7	
Partially	12	4	3	0	8	
No Response	3	3	4	0	10	

REFERENCE ASSISTANCE

This part of the report analyses whether the users of the Library ask for reference assistance and if they are satisfied with the responses given to them.

Table 13 indicates that over half of the users (55%) ask the staff for help and 99% were satisfied with the help given. It becomes obvious that reference assistance by the Library staff is a large part of the Municipal Reference Library's services. You would expect this due to the nature of the Library's collection. It is also significant to note that the reference staff is doing an excellent job in meeting its user's reference needs.

We can now break these figures down further and look at what occupations are asking the staff for help. Table 14 shows that students are asking for the most reference assistance. Out of 58 students 45 asked for help and it is here that the one person was not satisfied with the help given.

Government employees ask for the least help. This could be because of the fact that most of this group is located at City Hall and use the Library to check a directory, a bylaw or look for an article in the newspaper. They could be in and out of the Library several times a day depending on the nature of their work. The proximity of this Library not only provides them with excellent reference materials on local governments but also acts as a ready reference source and a place to study or to read on a coffee break. If the government employees use

the Library fairly often they will become acquainted with the collection and will not have to ask as many questions as someone who uses the Library perhaps three or four times in the year.

TABLE 13

Did you ask the staff for help today? N=164

Yes	55%	(90)
No	40%	(65)
No Response	5%	(9)
	100%	164

If yes, were you satisfied with the help given? N=90

Yes	99%	(89)
No	0	0
Partially	1%	(1)
	100%	90

TABLE 14

Did you ask the staff for help today?

	Student	Gov't Employee	Consulting/ Research Firm	Law Firm	Other	No Response
	N=58	N=29	N=14	N=4	N=53	6
Yes	45	11	7	3	21	
No	13	18	7	1	28	
No Response	0	0	0	0	4	

Were you satisfied with the help given?

Yes	44	11	7	4	21
No	0	0	0	0	0
Partially	1	0	0	0	0

TELEPHONE REFERENCE SERVICE

The next set of tabulations investigates whether the users of the Municipal Reference Library are aware of the Library's telephone reference service.

Table 15 indicates that 64% do not know about the telephone service. Of the 33% who use the service approximately half use it and half do not.

It is obvious that this is a service where some sort of publicity is needed to acquaint the users with the fact that they can use this telephone service. If this is done the Library must be prepared to face the fact that the response could be more than they bargained for. The Library should first examine whether they have the staff and time to meet a possible large increase in the telephone reference service.

Let us examine now whether any one occupation knows or does not know about this service more than another. Table 16 indicates that although all occupations show that a fair number of users are uninformed about the service students are the highest number. Of 58 students 42 did not know about the service. The 53 users who indicate various occupations have 35 who do not know of the service. I suspect that this group's no responses are high because of the 'gentlemen' who are coming to the Library because they have nowhere else to go. Many do not have a bed to sleep in let alone a telephone or a need to use this service.

Again cell frequencies are very low in this table so that it is impossible to draw too many conclusions.

Question J of the questionnaire asked the users if they knew about the service why they did not use it. Again responses were low but several indicated that they needed to come to the Library and use the materials themselves.

TABLE 15

Did you know that the MRL gives telephone reference service? N=164

Yes	33%	(53)
No	64%	(105)
No Response	3%	(6)
	100%	164

If you know that the MRL offers telephone service, have you used it? N=53

Yes	51%	(27)
No	49%	(26)
	100%	53

TABLE 16

Did you know that the MRL gives telephone reference service?

	Student	Gov't Employee	Consulting/ Research Firm	Law Firm	Other	No Response
	N=58	N=29	N=14	N=4	N=53	6
Yes	16	11	6	1	15	
No	42	18	8	3	34	
No Response	0	0	0	0	4	

If you know that the MRL offers telephone service, have you used it?

Yes	8	7	3	1	7
No	8	4	3	0	8

PLACE OF RESIDENCE OF USERS

The next set of tables looks at where the users who use the Municipal Reference Library's services live and work.

Table 17 indicates that over half of the users (54%) come from the City of Toronto. A significant number also come from North York (14%). Of the 8% who responded to other places 1 came from Chatham, 2 from Markham, 2 from Mississauga, 1 from Pickering, 2 from Brampton, 1 from Victoria, B.C. and 1 from the United States.

You would expect that a large number would come from the city. The low response from Scarborough could be due to the fact that the borough has an excellent municipal library. However, if this is the case then it does not account for North York being so high since it too has a good urban affairs collection.

Perhaps the answer does not lie here but instead in the nature of the research being done. Obviously North York and Scarborough will not have the extensive historical collections that the Municipal Reference Library would have. We must also remember that this survey was conducted over two days only and two weeks from now more users could come from Scarborough or for that matter any borough. Figures in some of these tables are low and this must be taken into account when we are analyzing the data.

TABLE 17

Where do you live?	N=164		
	East York	5%	(8)
	Etobicoke	7%	(11)
	North York	14%	(23)
	Scarborough	5%	(8)
	Toronto (City)	54%	(90)
	York	7%	(11)
	Other	8%	(13)
		100%	164

Let us now examine Table 18 which breaks the figures down by occupation. This table indicates that out of 58 students 29 are from Toronto and 9 are from North York. It is interesting to note that of the 53 users who stated that they had various occupations 33 are from Toronto. Again I feel that the number is high because of the large number of 'gentlemen' who are obviously from the city.

Table 19's tabulations tried to examine whether the users who live outside the city know about the Municipal Reference Library's telephone reference service. Again, in all the boroughs and the city as well the numbers are higher who do not know about the service.

Tabulations were also calculated to try to establish a relationship between where government employees are employed and whether this has an effect on their use of the telephone reference service. However, again figures were not high enough to establish any pattern. These tables can be located in Appendices E and F.

This set of tables has established the fact that distance does not seem to make a difference for using the telephone reference service. It is obvious that most people, who were sampled on this questionnaire, preferred to come to the Library to use the materials themselves.

A large number of users are making extensive use of the Library's books, magazines, council bylaws, minutes, agendas, etc, and vertical file materials. Over half of the users also

are requesting reference assistance. It therefore appears that a high percentage of users are involved in research that requires the use of the Library's extensive reference materials in person. It is not possible from this questionnaire to establish what users could have been satisfied by using the Library's telephone reference service.

TABLE 18

Where do you live?

	Student	Gov't Employee	Consulting/ Research Firm	Law Firm	Other	No Response
	N=58	N=29	N=14	N=4	N=53	6
East York	2	4	0	0	2	
Etobicoke	5	0	2	1	3	
North York	9	5	2	1	5	
Scarborough	0	5	0	0	3	
Toronto (City)	29	11	9	2	33	
York	6	2	0	0	3	
Other	7	2	1	0	4	

TABLE 19

Where do you live and do you know that the MRL gives telephone reference service?

	East York	Etobicoke	North York	Scarborough	Toronto (City)	York	Other
	N=8	N=11	N=23	N=8	N=90	N=11	N=13
Yes	2	2	7	2	31	4	0
No	6	8	16	6	59	7	13

If you know that the MRL offers telephone reference service, have you used it?

Yes	2	0	4	2	14	2	0
No	0	2	3	0	17	2	0

USER'S KNOWLEDGE OF LIBRARY'S COLLECTION

The last set of tables shows the percentages of users who know what places the Municipal Reference Library has material on. Table 20 indicates that 29% know that the Library has material on Toronto, 21% on Ontario municipalities, 18% on Canadian municipalities, 13% on United States municipalities and 10% on foreign municipalities.

It is surprising that only alittle over one third of the Library users knew that the Library had material on Toronto. I would have thought that this figure would have been much higher because if the Municipal Reference Library does not have material on Toronto then what does the users expect the Library to have material on? It is not surprising that only 10% knew that the Library collected materials on foreign municipalities. The Library staff felt this would probably be the case.

Table 21 looks at what the individual occupations think the Library has material on. Again these tabulations bear out Table 20's findings. It is interesting to note that it is the other occupations who knew the least that the Library has material on Toronto. Out of 53 users only 32 stated that the Library had material on Toronto while out of 58 students 44 knew the Library had material on Toronto and out of 29 government employees 23 responded to this question.

I can not see any real pattern developing in these tables. It is human nature that people do not like to admit that they

do not know something. Therefore, it seems the users tended to pick off the most likely choices or did not respond at all.

It is obvious, especially in the United States and foreign collections, that users need to be informed of the Library's collection in these areas. However, the tables under Library Materials and Reference Assistance indicate that the users seem to be getting what they want. Written responses, as I have stated before, were not high so I can not draw any firm conclusions but it would be interesting to know where the users who need information on United States and foreign municipalities are going to get their information. This would, however, be difficult to ascertain.

TABLE 20

What places does the MRL have material on? Users could cite more than one reason. N=394

Toronto	29%	(113)
Ontario Municipalities	21%	(82)
Canadian Municiplities	18%	(70)
United States Municipalities	13%	(52)
Foreign Municipalities	10%	(40)
No Response	9%	(37)
	100%	394

TABLE 21

What places does the MRL have material on? Users could cite more than one reason.

	Student	Gov't Employee	Consulting/ Research Firm	Law Firm	Other	No Respons
	N=58	N=29	N=14	N=4	N=53	6
Toronto	44	23	9	3	32	
Ontario Municipalities	28	21	9	4	22	
Canadian Municipalities	22	16	10	1	21	
United States Municipalities	14	15	8	0	16	
Foreign Municipalities	13	9	6	0	12	
No Response	6	3	3	1	15	

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Question R asked the users for suggestions in improving the Library's collection, environment and furniture and equipment. Again responses were very low.

5 users commented on the Library's chairs. They wanted some softer chairs added to the Library. They also felt that the arms on the present chairs did not allow the user to get close enough to the tables. 4 users also complained that the air conditioning was too loud.

Several users wanted more copies of newspapers and they objected to the 'gentlemen' who spent so much time reading the newspapers.

3 users wanted a better photocopying machine and 2 wanted another machine as well.

Overall the comments were very general in nature and the users seem satisfied with the Municipal Reference Library or are unwilling to make any suggestions for improvement. For a list of responses to this question please see Appendix G.

CONCLUSIONS

There are a number of variables that will influence the findings of this study.

As I have stated throughout my report there is a percentage of 'gentlemen' who use the Library because they have nowhere else to go. This group seems to be buried in the statistics and I feel they distort some of the percentages.

I was also asked to hand out questionnaires to the people who just used the photocopying machine. Several filled out the questionnaire but when the results were tabulated only 1 person comes out using this service.

It thus becomes apparent that some of the users are distorting the real reasons for using the Library. This should be taken into account when the tables are examined.

As I also indicated there was a low response from the users who were asked to specify certain information. This has made it difficult to draw any conclusions from these responses.

Since the Municipal Reference Library is serving a special clientele and the staff knows many of their user's reference needs it might be possible to attempt the survey again using an interview technique. In this way the interviewer would have control over the user's responses to specific information.

There was also a concern that the user statistics are low at this time of year because the university students have finished for the year. It would be more advantageous, if the

survey is repeated, to conduct it in the fall or late winter. Results could then be compared with the previous survey.

It must also be remembered that the data on which this report is based was taken over a 2 day period only. As I have already stated different times of the year could alter the conclusions drawn from this study.

Since the number of responses was relatively low (164 users) it was difficult to be sure that the right conclusions were drawn. Cell frequencies were very low when extensive cross tabulations were attempted. However, this survey has indicated some important findings.

60% of the Library's users are there to do an assignment or job related research. Students (35%) are the largest users of the Library but other occupations (32%) are also using the Library as well.

Indications are that the users are making extensive use of the Library's books, magazines, council bylaws, agendas, minutes, etc. and vertical file materials. However, microfilm and microfiche material is an area that is not getting much use.

Three quarters of the users are finding all or partially all of the materials that they are looking for. Reference assistance is an important function of the Municipal Reference Library and the users are very pleased with the help given.

It is apparent in this survey that users do not know about the Library's telephone reference service. This is one area

where the Library should see if something could be done to improve this situation.

As I stressed earlier in my report the staff must first decide whether they can adequately handle a high increase in telephone reference service. It would be perhaps a good idea to compare the Library's telephone reference statistics and see if they are high. There might be a high percentage of users who are using the telephone service but who are not visiting the Library in person. This survey only sampled the people who came into the Library. It did not look at the statistics from the Library's telephone reference service.

The figures also indicated that a high percentage of users are coming from Toronto (54%) with a wide spread from the boroughs. It must be remembered that other boroughs, as I have indicated earlier, such as Scarborough and the City of North York are developing their own urban affairs collections. It would depend on the nature of the user's research whether he has to go to the Municipal Reference Library. Please remember, again, that the survey was taken for 2 days only.

The questionnaire also pointed out that a large percentage of users are unaware that the Library collects materials from foreign and United States municipalities. However, only 29% responded that the Municipal Reference Library has material on Toronto. The tables do indicate that the users are finding the information that they are looking for and it might be that this question is worded wrong or does not belong on this type of

survey.

Major changes that the Library has made in its collection does not seem to have had an adverse effect on the Library's users. No one commented on the Municipal Reference Library not having business material or more telephone directories. Vertical file material seems to be in great demand and this could be reflected in the Library's reorganization of this material. No one complained about the Library's collection and the users are indicating that most are finding what they are looking for. Several users indicated that they would like more newspapers and more choice. However, I suspect that it is the 'gentlemen' who are making these comments.

This survey has provided an overall view of user patterns. The small sample makes it difficult to draw too many fine conclusions.

As I mentioned earlier an interview approach might be able to draw out the users who are using other materials in the Library. It could separate the element of 'gentlemen' who are distorting many of the figures. When conducting any survey of the Library it must be kept in mind that the Municipal Reference Library is a 'special' public library serving the needs of an unique clientele.

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METROPOLITAN TORONTO LIBRARY BOARD
Municipal Reference Library
1980 User Study

APPENDIX A

A. Why did you come to the library today?
(Check as many as apply)
1. to do an assignment ☐
2. to study ☐
3. to do job related research ☐
4. to do other research (please specify)

5. other (please specify)

B. What kinds of material did you use?
(Check as many as apply)
1. books ☐
2. magazines ☐
3. vertical files (newspaper clippings, pamphlets) ☐
4. microfilm/microfiche ☐
5. Council bylaws, minutes, agendas; committee reports, agendas ☐
6. other (please specify)

C. If you came for materials, did you find what you wanted?
1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐ 3. Partially ☐

D. If you answered "No" or "Partially" in Question C, what were you looking for?

E. Did you ask the staff for help today?
1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

F. If yes, were you satisfied with the help given?
1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐ 3. Partially ☐

G. If you answered "No" or "Partially" in Question F, why were you not satisfied with the help given?

H. Did you know that the Municipal Reference Library gives telephone reference service?
1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

I. If you know that MRL offers telephone reference service, have you used it?
1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐

J. If you answered "No", why not?

K. Who FIRST referred you to this library?
1. no one ☐
2. teacher-instructor ☐
3. parent ☐
4. friend ☐
5. another library (please give name)

L. What places does the Municipal Reference Library have material on? (Check as many as apply)
1. Toronto ☐
2. Ontario municipalities ☐
3. Canadian municipalities ☐
4. United States municipalities ☐
5. Foreign municipalities outside the U.S. and Canada ☐

M. What places were you trying to find information on? Please list all which apply.

N. What is your occupation?
1. student ☐
2. government employee (including Boards and Commissions) ☐
3. politician ☐
4. employee/partner of consulting/research firm ☐
5. employee/partner of law firm ☐
6. other (please specify) ☐

O. If you are now a student, please check below which categories you are in.
Part-time ☐ Full time ☐

1. High School ☐
2. Independent schools ☐
3. Community College ☐
4. Ryerson ☐
5. University ☐
6. Other (please specify) ☐

P. If you are an employee of government (including Boards and Commissions) or a politician, please check which government you work for:
1. East York ☐
2. Etobicoke ☐
3. North York ☐
4. Scarborough ☐
5. Toronto (City) ☐
6. North York ☐
7. Metro Toronto ☐
8. Provincial ☐
9. Other (please specify) ☐

Q. Where do you live?
1. East York ☐
2. Etobicoke ☐
3. North York ☐
4. Scarborough ☐
5. Toronto (City) ☐
6. York ☐
7. Other (please specify) ☐

R. Suggestions for improvement
Collection:

Environment - space provided, noise level, etc.:

Furniture & equipment:

For additional comments use other side
PLEASE LEAVE IT AT THE EXIT

APPENDIX B

This is a list of occupations from the users who would give this information on the questionnaire. The numbers after each occupation indicate the number of people who specified that they belonged to this category.

Accountant 2

Small Business Operatore 2

Architect 1

Unemployed 5

Teacher 1

Merchant 1

Researcher 1

Journalist 1

Employee of a Publishing Firm 3

Purchase Analyst 1

Librarian 3

Developer 1

Labourer 2

Self Employed 5

Retired 8

Brokerage Firm 1

Insurance 1

Engineer 2

Housewife 1

Employee of a Printing Firm 1

Photographer 1

Clerk 1

APPENDIX C

Question D - If you answered 'No' or 'Partially' in Question C, what were you looking for?

Partially

Building lumber maintenance.

Toronto housing renovation in general.

Toronto population density maps.

Research on poverty - material was out being bound.

Specific poverty areas in Toronto.

Federal and local report on Canadian ports.

Specific future survival plan for the City of Toronto.

Updated statistics on parks and recreation in Scarborough.

Material on Toronto for the 1920's.

Six months of back issues for Toronto Star and Globe and Mail.

Copy of a bylaw.

Bylaw changes.

Newspaper clippings of TTC in the 1940's.

No

Transportation Research Record #599

Bylaws on garages.

Information on an old Toronto house.

Material on Yorkville.

Statistics Canada - Section 26.

Commercial real estate development projections.

APPENDIX D

Question M - What places were you trying to find information on?

1. A small business operator was looking for information on Toronto population redistributions.

2. An employee of a publishing firm was looking for information on Houston, Washington, D.C. and San Diego.

3. A user was looking for commercial real estate projections for cities in the West. He did not find what he was looking for but stressed that the staff was very helpful.

4. A high school student was looking for information on the Eaton Centre.

5. A high school student was looking for information on Toronto City Hall.

6. A high school student was looking for information on cycle paths in Toronto.

7. A high school student was looking for information on St. James Town.

8. A university student was looking for information on Deer Park.

9. A high school student was looking for information on sewerage in Toronto.

10. A high school student was looking for information on the Golden Horseshoe.

11. A high school student was looking for information on Yorkville but was told by the staff that the Library did not have any material.

12. A university student was looking for information on Yonge Street.

13. A high school student was looking for information on the Toronto Island.

14. A federal government employee was looking for information on crime control in large urban areas.

15. An accountant was looking for information on Ontario corporations.

*Where I do not specify the person found the information he was looking for.

APPENDIX E

If you are an employee of the government where do you live? N=29

East York	1
Etobicoke	0
North York	1
Scarborough	0
Toronto City	15
Metro Toronto	6
Provincial	4
Other	2
	29

APPENDIX F

If you are a government employee which government do you work for and do you know that the MRL gives telephone reference service? N=29

	East York	Etobicoke	North York	Scarborough	Toronto (City)	York	Other	Prov.	Metro
Yes	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	2	3
No	1	0	1	0	11	0	3	3	1

If you know that the MRL offers telephone reference service, have you used it?

Yes	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	1
NO	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2

APPENDIX G

Suggestions for improvement

Better microfilm projectors 2

More desks 2

Softer chairs and a different type of chair 5

Better lighting 1

'Gentlemen' are irritating 3

More out of town newspapers 1

More space 3

Better photocopying machince 3

Another photocopying machine to avoid line ups 2

More United States newspapers 1

More copies of newspapers 1

More UNESCO and OECD publications for comparisons 1

*The numbers indicate the number of people who responded to the question.

APPENDIX H

What specific materials did you use?

Directories 5

Maps 1

Photocopying machine 1

Census data 3

*The numbers indicate the number of people who responded to the question.